

# CAPTAIN TELLS OF VOLTURNO'S FATE

Narrative Runs without Apparent Omission of Any Salient Fact But One.

## ORIGIN OF FIRE NOT STATED

Flames Burst through Hatches So Suddenly That Watch Below Was Burned to Death.

New York, Oct. 14.—Capt. Francis Inch, whose steamer, the Voltorno, was burned at sea with the loss of 134 lives, told his story of the disaster tonight. It is a plain seaman's tale, but in it, line by line, the horrors of the disaster and terrible ordeal through which passengers and crew passed are brought out all the more clearly, perhaps, because of the marked directness and simplicity with which the story is told.

From its beginning, where the outbreak of the fire which spelled the doom of the Voltorno is recorded, the narrative runs without the apparent omission of any salient fact, but one to the point where the blazing ship was abandoned, the last remaining passenger taken off and the captain and what was left of the crew boarded the waiting Kroonland.

Captain Inch, however, does not say what caused the fire, reporting simply that the chief officer advised him a few minutes before the ship was abandoned that the last remaining passenger taken off and the captain and what was left of the crew boarded the waiting Kroonland.

Although all possible measures were at once taken to subdue the fire, the captain's story shows that it was even then too late to save the watch below. The men were trapped in the forecastle and burned to death there, their fellow sailors helpless to aid them.

Then came explosions, which wrecked part of the midship section of the steamer. The situation was plainly becoming desperate. The call for help for wireless help came out as the flames shot through the forward hatches, and the crew was doing its fighting best to stay the progress of the flame until assistance should come.

ATTEMPTS TO LAUNCH BOATS. It looked then as if there was no possible chance to save the steamer, and although the sea was running high and the Voltorno was rolling heavily, the captain had boats provisioned and swung out. "Boats Nos. 13 and 15 were smashed," is the simple way Captain Inch describes the first result of the attempt to launch the life boat. But Chief Officer Miller's boat and another, although the captain had boats provisioned and swung out, "Boats Nos. 13 and 15 were smashed," is the simple way Captain Inch describes the first result of the attempt to launch the life boat.

Another boat described as No. 6, commanded by Fourth Officer Lamuel, also got away filled with stowage passengers. Captain Inch knew nothing of the fate of these boats and so far as it is known none of them were saved. Although a wireless call had been made for them by stowage passengers, they were not seen until after the ship had been abandoned.

WORKED HARD MAKING RAFTS. Captain Inch describes the arrival of one of the rescuing craft, commanded by the wireless operators, who worked until eleven o'clock at night when the fire had progressed so far that the rescue on the wreck containing stowage passengers and lights blew up, carrying away the aerial apparatus and compelling the wireless men to cease their efforts.

DEAD MAY NUMBER 13. It is possible that the total of dead in the disaster may shrink slightly when all lists are tabulated. Today Passenger Agent Furman of the Transatlantic line, said that his figures showed that 67 persons sailed on the Voltorno, including 24 cabin and 50 stowage passengers and 92 crew. His list showed that 126 persons had been accounted for, leaving 13 on the list of missing.

STORY OF LA TOURNAIE. Second Rescue Ship Brings 42 Survivors from the Voltorno.

HAVER, FRANCE, Oct. 14.—La Tournaie of the French line, second of the rescue ships which figured in the Voltorno disaster, reached port, arrived at Havre this morning. La Tournaie had 12 survivors of the disaster on board.

The driftnet group on board the La Tournaie when she arrived at the quay was formed by eight children from 3 to 12 years old who had been rescued from the Voltorno and whose parents either had perished or were aboard wrecked ships of the rescuing steamer.

Several of the survivors agreed when talking to Mr. Fuller that the fire originated in an explosion of grease in a galley as a result of which several cooks and their assistants were killed. Later a number of the crew and several passengers lost their lives fighting the flames.

First Officer Robinson of the Minneapolis said that when he got alongside the Voltorno with a lifeboat there were no indications of panic or confusion on board. The flames were on deck pointed out by one of those selected to be taken off. None tried to get ahead of the others.

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The New England territory has divided by this company into hexagonal blocks containing a little more than 16 square miles each, and measurements are made from the center of the block. Seven of these blocks constitute a section, and for distances between 5 miles, measurements are made from and to the center of the various sections.

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# NEARLY FINISHES TELEPHONE CASE

Free Service, Toll Rates, Traffic and Other Contracts Explained to P. S. C.

Montpelier, Oct. 14.—When the public service commission adjourned this afternoon Vice-President E. K. Hall had finished his presentation of the case of the New England company, with the exception of the effect of the proposed change of rates. This will be taken up tomorrow morning and will probably consume about an hour.

He will be followed either by Mr. Spaulding, the president, or Mr. Langley, the auditor.

Mr. Hall took up today the matter of free service, toll rates and service, traffic contracts and other contracts with subsidiary and independent companies.

He stated that a discount of one-fourth to one-third was given to certain charitable institutions; that there was a rate for municipalities, a discount of 33 1/3 per cent, or one free telephone for each 200 of population; that there is a special rate for employees and that frank books are issued to certain persons under the ruling of the interstate commerce commission.

Although the rates have been reduced the service to the subscriber has been increased and improved.

The average revenue per station in 1932 was \$5.20, 1933, \$4.79, 1934, \$4.59, 1935, \$4.39, 1936, \$4.19, 1937, \$3.99, 1938, \$3.79, 1939, \$3.59, 1940, \$3.39, 1941, \$3.19, 1942, \$2.99.

BRATTLEBORO AS AN EXAMPLE. As an example of the reduction in rates at Brattleboro, where a one-party business phone in 1935 cost \$4 per year, with only 12 subscribers in the town, two-party \$72, three-party \$33. In 1940 the rate was reduced to \$6 per year; 1941, \$5.90, 1942, \$5.80, and the number of subscribers is 1,321.

Coming to the matter of toll rates, he showed how the exchange and toll service were inter-related and that the two combined made up the service and the business.

The first toll rate was altogether an experiment and was made on a basis of one cent per mile of distance for five minutes' conversation. It was found that about 92 per cent of the users of toll lines used the line less than three minutes, so a new rate was arranged of six-tenths of a cent per mile for a three-minute conversation. This was not entirely satisfactory, for it was found that for conversations beyond 75 miles the charge of six-tenths of a cent was just about the exact cost.

The rate shown was submitted showing that the present average charge up to 75 miles is five-tenths of a cent per mile and beyond that six-tenths, with an occasional increase from five-tenths to one cent per mile.

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